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13 September 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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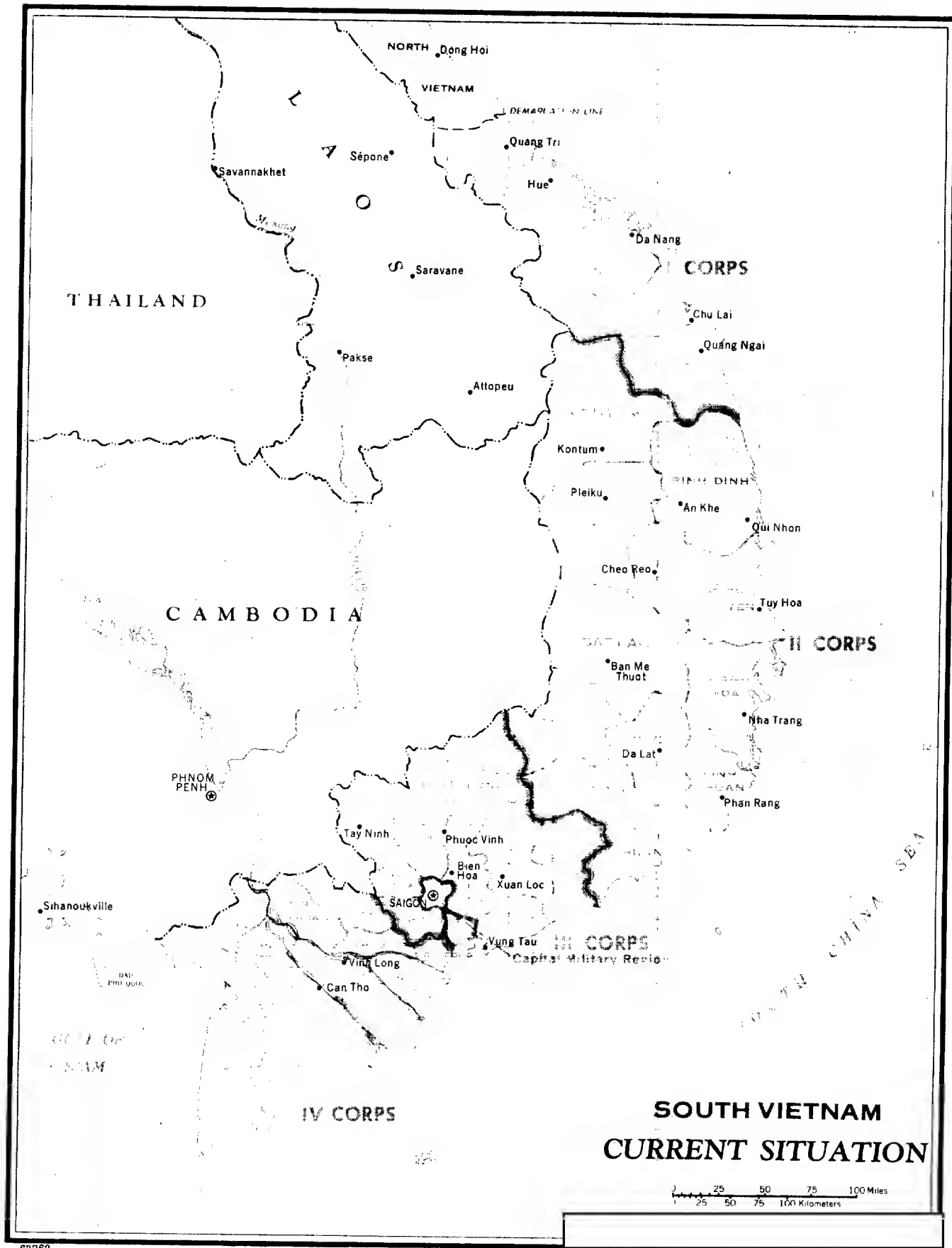
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: Following up on Sunday's election of a constitutional assembly, government leaders yesterday announced the list of elected delegates and described the election total as a solid government victory.

Preliminary data on the delegates indicate that southerners and Buddhists will form pluralities in terms of regional and religious backgrounds, with Catholics also well represented. Nearly half the delegates are business and nongovernment professional men. Thirty-six government personnel--18 military men and 18 civil servants--were also elected. The assembly is scheduled to convene on 26 September.

Despite overwhelming evidence of a large voter turnout on Sunday, a Viet Cong radio commentary yesterday doggedly reiterated the claim that the Liberation Front controls 10 million of the country's 14 million people. It thus described the government's voter registration total of over five million as fraudulent and the assembly as meaningless.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: There are indications that the 610th North Vietnamese/Viet Cong Division has once again begun offensive tactics in Binh Dinh Province after avoiding contact with allied forces for two months. On 8 September, four separate enemy attacks were launched against government forces and outposts in the eastern part of the province. Although the enemy units were unidentified, US military authorities in Saigon have reported that they were probably elements of the 610th Division.

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France-US: Paris has told Washington that it will not permit the US the wartime use of bases in France unless Paris itself declares war.

Couve de Murville informed Ambassador Bohlen on 9 September that the wartime use of communications facilities and the petroleum pipeline now serving US forces in Europe would also be contingent on a French declaration of war.

France proposes an agreement for peacetime utilization of the communication facilities and pipeline, which the French control and man, but refuses any commitment for wartime use. This indicates that Paris envisages a situation in which France might remain neutral while its NATO allies were at war.

Couve also said that the US could leave no supplies or materials, even in French custody, on the facilities.

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Nationalist China: President Chiang Kai-shek is showing extreme frustration over the inability of his regime to exploit the current turmoil in Communist China.

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Chiang has an exaggerated notion of the capabilities of his government to take advantage of the unrest on the mainland and probably feels that his subordinates are willfully refusing to carry out his wishes. His frustration has been heightened by publicity given a rash of recent corruption cases. The Control Yuan's failure to get prior approval by the Standing Committee in its impeachment of government officials responsible for the corruption was a flagrant breach of party discipline which further irritated the President.

In response, Chiang has threatened to resign as President if the Standing Committee fails to deal harshly with the Control Yuan. This threat is probably a tactic by Chiang to induce greater compliance from his subordinates. He has threatened to resign on several occasions in recent years.

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Guatemala: The Communist action group FAR has responded to a "final" presidential appeal for conciliation by reiterating its aim to seize power through revolution.

In reply to President Mendez' call for "concord" in a speech on 7 September, the guerrilla organization issued a bulletin denouncing plotting by extreme rightists in the National Liberation Movement and in the military. The bulletin also accused the government of contriving crises to suppress the populace. The FAR foresees a prolonged revolutionary struggle but said that it will not fight the army unless provoked by military action. It reserved the right to eliminate selectively those responsible for "crimes against the people."

Mendez' speech has been well received by the public and by officials within his government. His warning that the full legal and armed weight of the government will fall on any group rejecting his call to peace has been read as an unequivocal commitment to quell insurgency.

Mendez has told the US ambassador, however, that he considers elimination of the guerrillas a long-range problem and that his speech was directed largely at rightists, to whom he assigns primary blame for the deterioration of his government's position. A failure by Mendez to act firmly and promptly against Communist subversion will sharpen the restiveness among military elements already suspicious of his inaction.

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NOTES

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*Argentina: Argentine authorities anticipate serious antigovernment outbreaks following the death yesterday of student leader Santiago Pompillon, who was shot last week by police in Cordoba. Federal police reinforcements have been sent to Cordoba, where several students were arrested during disturbances provoked by the announcement of the death. Student groups have been demonstrating for several weeks in a number of cities in protest against the government's intervention in Argentina's eight national universities. For the first time some important labor groups have begun to express open support for the demonstrations.

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